

THE JOINT ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION EMERITUS CLUB
CHARLES REDD CENTER FOR WESTERN STUDIES

LAWRENCE SARDONI

Interviewed

by

Betrand Harrison

February 16, 1981

PREFACE

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INTERVIEWEE: Lawrence Sardoni
INTERVIEWER: Bertrand Harrison
SUBJECT: BYU Reminiscences
DATE: February 16, 1981
PLACE: Harold B. Lee Library, BYU

H: Dr. Sardoni, would you begin by telling us where and when you were born, and something about your early years.

S: I was born on January 2, 1911 in Salt Lake City, Utah. My grandfather, Charles J. Thomas was one of the early Utah musicians. He was the first leader of the Salt Lake Theatre Orchestra, appointed to do so by Brigham Young. He was a musician born and trained in England--a French horn player. He had the privilege of playing at one time in a symphony orchestra directed by Felix Mendelson. He joined the Church in 1850 and migrated to Utah in 1862. My father was also a musician, as was my mother. My father was on a concert tour of the United States when his accompanist was taken sick in Reno, Nevada. He wired on to Salt Lake to get an accompanist and they procured the services of a young L.D.S. pianist for his Salt Lake Concert, who later became my mother. My father came to Salt Lake and gave his concert, after which his accompanist joined him and they finished the tour. My father liked what he saw in Salt Lake, so he returned. My grandfather, C.J. Thomas, was possibly more taken up with my father than my mother was. He arranged for B.H. Roberts and Orson Whitney to be my father's teachers of the gospel. These two brethren made short work of converting my father, and a year later my mother and father were married in the Salt Lake Temple. My father was employed by the Church Education System to work with music departments throughout the Junior colleges. In my youth, we lived in Rexburg, Idaho and then Paris, Idaho. My father also taught at the Gila Academy. So, in my youth I traveled quite a bit. I started studying music when I was five or six years old, and from my training in the home--the environment in the home, music became my profession.

H: When did you end up going to Colorado?

S: When my father was in Paris, Idaho, he made some acquaintances with very talented music students in Idaho. One of them was Cleon Dalby and one was Francis Findlay. Francis Findlay left Idaho, went to the New England Conservatory and became one of the administrators there. Dr. Findlay invited my father to come back to Boston to teach at the New England Conservatory, which he did. But, the weather in Boston didn't agree with my father, so he moved back out to Utah. Later, Cleon Dalby, who was in Grand Junction, Colorado, got in contact with my father and told him of a good position in Colorado. We moved to Colorado in 1932. I

was at Brigham Young University at the time, and after graduating and teaching in Fountain Green for two years, my father was taken sick and I was contacted to head the Music Department of the Mesa College in Grand Junction, Colorado. I stayed there until I enlisted in the Navy in 1943.

H: You went to grade school then, in Utah and Idaho?

S: My grade schooling was in Logan, and then from Logan we moved to bountiful. I finished up grade school and high school--the high school at that time was Davis County High, which was in Kaysville, Utah.

H: Tell us about where you spent your time in the Navy.

S: I spent it in a beautiful place, which we all hated at the time, Farragut, Idaho, on the shores of Lake ponderay. If I'd been there on a vacation, it would have been a lovely, lovely place. But being there in a Navy environment was not so enjoyable. Later, I was sent to the University of Idaho, to the radio school, after the radio school, I went to Puget Sound Navy yard. The admiral there was a music buff; he loved music very much, and he had given orders that if any musicians came through, that they were to be taken out and he was to see their qualifications. When my papers came through the office for assignment, they were pulled out and sent into him and I was assigned to the Puget Sound Symphony Orchestra. I spent my Navy time in the orchestra playing for concerts for the workers of the Puget Sound Navy yard--concerts for the public, and playing in dance combos for Naval groups and officers clubs.

H: Tell us where you met your wife.

S: In my family, like a lot of other families, we were much affected by the Depression of 1930. My father accepted a position in the North Sanpete School District. I was at BYU. Our bank had closed, and there was no money left to go to school. I had become acquainted with Elson Jones who was superintendent of the Sanpete School District--my father at the time was teaching in Mt. Pleasant under superintendent Jones. There was an opening in fountain Green. I had had two years at the university. Supt. Jones wanted me to come to Fountain Green and take the Junior High School music position. I taught in Fountain Green for two years. My wife at the time was teaching second grade, and we became acquainted professionally. It ripened into something more than professional, and after three or four months, I spent all of the recess hours down in the second grade room.

H: What year were you married?

- S: We were married in 1934. I went down there to teach in 1932, and taught two years and then we were married in 1934 and came back to Brigham Young University. My sister was ready to come to school, so we took my sister and one other girl as boarders. My wife had saved a little, and I had saved a little and by taking in boarders, we were able to complete our education at the Y.
- H: What recollections do you have of your student days at the Y?
- S: In 1930, the Y was a wonderful place to go to school it was comparatively small, the atmosphere was friendly and intimate, a marvelous student body and a marvelous faculty. It was a faculty of dedicated men who were tremendously interested in their students. I can remember many times of being invited to Sunday dinners by members of the faculty, LeRoy Robertson, Gerrit de Jong, Will Hansen and others. One of the most astounding things for me to think of now, is that tuition at the Y in those days was twenty-five dollars a quarter. When I came back to the Y in 1932, I was a student-teacher teaching two classes in harmony, on the National Youth Administration program. Our pay was twenty-five cents an hour. I remember after teaching the entire year I went to settle with the school administration for my tuition expenses. From my salary of twenty-five cents an hour, after paying my tuition, I had a balance of three dollars and a seventy-five cents left over. Another remarkable thing in those days was that the financial office personnel of the university consisted of Keifer Sauls and one part-time assistant. The part time helper was Carma Ballif. In addition to working in the Treasurer's Office she taught classes in women's physical education. They were the whole financial structure of the university.
- H: It was in good hands too. What faculty members had a special influence on your life?
- S: LeRoy Robertson was my major professor, and I was almost like a son in his household. Brother Robertson upon many occasions invited me to go with him to concerts in Salt Lake city. Many times on Sunday afternoons, we would go to his place for dinner and sit and talk about music for hours and hours after dinner. There was a relationship there that I will never forget and for which I will always be grateful. I can remember also of being in classes with Parley (P.A.) Christensen, and I believe that from hearing him read Shakespeare, Milton and others, I possibly learned more in musical phrasing and in expression than I did from any classes in music. There were many outstanding men on the faculty of the university at this time, men that believed that Brigham Young University had a niche in the world; men

who were willing to make sacrifices to see this great heritage of Brigham Young University carried on.

H: How did you rate the strength of the Music Department at that time?

S: We lived in Bountiful before I came to Brigham Young University and my friends either went to the AC at Logan, or the University of Utah; very few of them came to Brigham Young University. Several people, musician friends of mine and teachers who were acquainted with music in Utah, told me that I would be foolish, if I were going to stay in Utah, to go anywhere other than Brigham Young University, because the Music Department here was superior. I took their advice and came here. Later, as I went to other universities, UCLA, Northwestern, and to the University of Illinois, and in teaching several summers at the University of Colorado in boulder, I found out that what I received here was equal or superior to what I could have received at these other universities, especially my work with LeRoy Robertson.

H: That's gratifying, isn't it? What are the departments that you had very much contact with besides English and Music?

S: I had some experiences that I'll never forget, one of them was in English with Karl Young. I was tremendously interested in Indians and I had been an Eagle Scout and had learned the trick of fire making by rubbing sticks and things like that. I can remember going out on several programs with Karl. We would wear Indian costumes, and I would make a fire by rubbing sticks to light the huge bon fire.

Another great experience I had was in the department of geology, through this experience, I had many opportunities. George Hansen was the teacher, and I was much affected by his teaching; by the warmth of his personality, and by the stories he told in class, and by the way that he made geology live for his students. One summer I was invited--partly because of my knowledge of geology, and partly because of my interest in photography, to spend a summer in Alaska with a geological party, photographing glaciers. That was a marvelous experience.

H: I guess part of your interest with William Hansen was through his interest in Indians.

S: Yes, Brother Hansen was in New York the first year I was here, and he was on a leave of absence and had presented his operas, or operettas in New York. When he returned the following year, we did two of them here at the Y; he was a very interesting person. Again, I travelled over the state with William Hansen as he appeared at high schools. He

would talk and play the piano and tell Indian stories and stories of his operas, and play music from his operas. I played violin solos on these programs.

H: How did you get interested in photography?

S: It's one of those things that just kind of happened. I think that possibly through displays, and exhibits of photography that I'd seen at the Y, that I took an interest in it. I got interested in something and then I go out all the way. I went all the way with photography, got good equipment, and went to exhibits to see what other people were doing and how they were doing it. Photography has been very good to me; I've enjoyed it very much.

H: Well, you've been good to photography too. Tell us about your teaching experiences from the beginning.

S: Right after I graduated from high school--that was the year that the Depression hit in 1930, my father was hired to go down and teach in North Sanpete. Superintendent Jones had been to a National Education Association meeting, and he had heard high school symphony orchestras at this meeting which had impressed him very, very much. In Sanpete County at that time, there were no string teachers, and there were no people that played string instruments. He was most interested in developing orchestra work in the schools in Sanpete County, so he hired me to teach violin classes in the schools. I went around to the schools, and taught violin for one year. It was quite an experience, and I think that I benefited greatly from this experience of teaching between high school and college. When I entered college, I had more of an idea of what teaching was like, and I found out that this was what I liked and this was what I wanted to do. When I came here, I entered into this part of my studies with more enthusiasm and with greater interest. I can remember, as a student assistant in the department, of receiving many opportunities to help other professors and get close to them in a way not possible had I not been doing this work. The work of LeRoy Robertson had always been a great inspiration to me, and as I went to Grand Junction, Colorado, the first thing that I wanted to do was to build for Grand Junction, a symphony orchestra comparable to the orchestra at the Y. My father, who was a violin teacher in Grand Junction had laid the foundation. There were many very good violin students, and right at the time that I went to Colorado, there was a young teacher in the high school in Grand Junction who was also very interested in building orchestras. Between he and I and others who were brought in to help us, we developed one of the finest orchestras in the state of Colorado. The college in Grand Junction was not big enough at the time to support a symphony orchestra, so

we built a community orchestra. I drew heavily on the experiences that I had had as orchestra manager under LeRoy Robertson. I can remember taking tours with the orchestra in Colorado and again I think these were made much better by the experiences that I had at the Brigham Young University, as the manager of the Brigham Young University Symphony Orchestra. There were many problems teaching music in a Junior College the greatest of which was a two year school, you have the students come in one year and leave the next, it is very difficult to build a fine organization. You just get them developed and the personnel graduates. It's very much different than teaching in a four year school. I remember that at the half-times of our Jr. College football games we would present our half-time shows with a marching band of from twenty-four to forty members.

H: Tell us about your beginning teaching at BYU then.

S: I had taught at the BYU during a number of summers, 1936 to 1943. I left Grand Junction in 1943 and went into the Navy. In November 1945 on my way from navy duty in Seattle to Grand Junction, I visited BYU. Brother Robertson asked me if I was interested in teaching here and I immediately told him yes. I called up Grand Junction and told them I would not return, and I started teaching as a graduate assistant in 1945. Then, in 1946, I was appointed to the permanent staff.

H: What were your assignments here?

S: I taught harmony, and orchestration and again helped Professor Robertson with the orchestra, and I also taught violin. In 1947, LeRoy Robertson left and went to the University of California for his doctorate degree. At that time, I was made conductor of the orchestra. From 1947 to 1964, I conducted the Brigham Young University Symphony Orchestra and taught various classes in music theory.

H: Do you have some recollections of some of your outstanding students?

S: We had some outstanding students at BYU. I remember when Maurice Abravanel was first appointed conductor of the Utah symphony. He came down to BYU on several occasions and sat in on orchestra rehearsals. A month or so later, when he formed the personnel of the Utah symphony, there were seventeen from BYU that were made members of the Utah symphony. Among them were Sam Pratt on flute, Nyla Stubbs our concert master, and 3 other violinists, three of our bass players, two cellists, and several wind players. Over the years we have had some really outstanding students. I remember one young lady, whom I was very impressed with, was

the concert master for some time. Her name is Karen Lynn, and she is now Dr. Lynn on the faculty in the English Department--a very, very brilliant person. Several of our outstanding students, who made enviable records in graduate schools of other universities have returned as members of the faculty, Dr. David Dulton, Dr. Glenn Williams, Dr. David Randall, Dr. Merrill Bradshaw, Dr. James Mason, Dr. Ralph Laycock and many others. All of these former BYU graduates upon completing their doctoral degrees at other institutions had accepted posts of faculty members at other institutions of higher learning before being brought back to B.Y.U. the Music Department has always been very strong here; it has always had excellent students, and I think we have a good representation of professional musicians and music faculty. Some of the great universities in the country have faculty who were students at BYU at one time.

H: Do you recall any of them?

S: Barbara Allen, is at UCLA. Norman Hunt, at the University of California at Sacramento, David Sargent at Eastman, Blaine Ellifsen at Illinois, Lynn Shurtleff at Stanford are to name a few.

H: How have you found the support of the music program by the administration, particularly the presidents that you served under?

S: I think that the university, and the Church as a whole, possibly owes President Harris a great debt of gratitude for his interest in fine things, for his interest in the arts and especially for his interest in music. I know that President Harris bent over backwards to support LeRoy Robertson in everything he did musically, and made it possible for him to do many things. Had he just been another teacher here, he would not have been able to do them. After the great years of President Harris, President McDonald was also interested in the orchestra, and interested in music. I think that the music department received their fair share of funds, and maybe just a little more than their fair share of funds during the time of President Harris and President McDonald. When President Wilkinson came, the University was getting bigger. President Wilkinson had many great challenges, and while he supported music and supported music and supported our program, and was instrumental in getting us the great new Fine Arts Center, he didn't seem to be actively as interested in music as some of the others. As new presidents have come along, and have seen that the Music Department was as strong as it is, I think that they have recognized this and supported the department very well. We've been very happy with the administration in the Music Department.

- H: I recall a statement that President Harris purportedly made, and I suppose its true. Near the close of President Harris' administration, he was talking with someone and he said, "After all, I think my greatest accomplishment is what we have done with the fine arts."
- S: I consider that to be true, knowing President Harris, because he took pride in what the Music Department had done and the Fine Arts Department had done. When good results were obtained he was in ecstasy.
- H: I know that the role of the Music Department is, primarily in the training of students, as well as being in the performing arts. Would you like to comment on the influence which the Music Department has had in the image the public has of the University and its fame as it has become known beyond the limits of Utah County.
- S: You mentioned the performing arts. There is a continual battle going on in the department as to what our purpose is, whether to train students or that of performance. It seems to me that in a subject such as music, there has to be some kind of a wedding of these two objectives. The people in the administration of the Music Department have emphasized the performing arts. For this reason, as long as I can remember Brigham Young University and the organizations here, the organizations have been outstanding. Before the time of the Utah Symphony, and before the time of so much radio and television, the Brigham Young University Band and the Brigham Young University Symphony Orchestra, were two of the outstanding musical organizations in the state, and I think that the image of the university was enhanced greatly by their proficiency and artistic excellence. I think that at one time, while the university was a small institution, and maybe suffering a little being in the shadow of the great institution to the north of us, that the Music Department helped tremendously in building an image for the university. There was no comparison when I was here, as a student in the excellence of the musical organizations at Brigham Young University, and in other institutions of the state of Utah; we drew many talented students from places like California, that had large Mormon populations. We drew many fine students to this university, who preferred to come here, rather than to go anywhere else, particularly because of the strong Music Department.
- H: What effect has the formation of the Utah Symphony had on the development of the Brigham Young University Symphony?
- S: Well, happily, the Utah Symphony is far enough distant from us so that the effect has not been too negative. The Utah

Symphony for years was on the campus of the University of Utah. They practiced, used the university's facilities for practicing, and the university symphony was always overshadowed by the Utah Symphony. Here, in Provo, I don't think the effect has been negative at all. We have used some of these professional musicians of the Utah Symphony as private teachers. It has given our good students a chance for good employment when they graduate from here and join the Utah Symphony. Because of this fact, it has given the students an impetus to practice more, to become better. I think in a way, it has helped the university. We have really worked harder since the Utah Symphony has been in existence. We have endeavored to make our symphony, by comparison, just as good as the Utah Symphony.

H: As I recall talking with LeRoy Robertson, the access to the Utah Symphony was one of the major reasons why he left BYU and went to the University of Utah.

S: I think so; I think that was one of the great factors. He felt that if he were in Salt Lake City, he would have more of a say-so in the formation, and in possibly directing the shape of the Utah Symphony, than he could have had, had he remained in Provo. I think this is one of the main reasons why he left. Another reason why he left, was because at the time, the University of Utah was a larger school, and I think that he felt that under his direction, the Music Department at the University of Utah would benefit greatly by his presence there, and possibly the future for him would be greater than if he remained here. One of his reasons for going there was certainly for the effect that he thought he could have on the Utah Symphony in working very closely with Maurice Abravanel.

H: I guess you find it a great satisfaction to see so many of your former students maintaining such a strong interest in music, that they have formed local symphonies and gotten together to play just for the joy of playing.

S: That's one of the great satisfactions of being a teacher, that after years, one can see the effect that he has made in the lives of others. For instance, to see the symphony at the present time, under the direction of Dr. Ralph Laycock, who is doing a marvelous, marvelous job, and to see the work of Dr. Dalton, and Dr. Randall and to go down, for instance, to a concert of the Utah Valley Symphony and see dozens and dozens of students there who have been one's own students; to see them still carrying on the tradition. The conductors of these orchestras, who are doing very, very good work are people who I've had some input in what they are doing; it is really very satisfying.

- H: Going beyond the influence that you've had in the lives of your students, you've also had the influence of raising the appreciation of fine music by all in the neighborhood who listen to you.
- S: Well, I hope that has been a fact.
- H: I think so. One of my recollections that I think of fondly, was our very strong Lyceum program. Comment on the influence of the Lyceum program in helping your students to see top performances.
- S: The Lyceum program here, as you mentioned, has been very, very strong, and again, stems back to President Harris. We had at the time a person in the Business Department, Herald R. Clark, who for some time was interested in art. Under his leadership, Brigham Young University began to acquire excellent paintings. I can remember in the early days, I would hear of LeRoy Robertson telling me if we could only get Herald R. Clark interested in music, and if he could do in music what he has done for the acquisition of paintings for the university, we would really be doing something. I don't know what President Harris, and LeRoy Robertson did, but all of a sudden, dean Clark turned his interest from painting to music, and at the moment, the Lyceum blossomed like a rose at Brigham Young University. In those years, BYU had one of the greatest Lyceum courses in all of the United States. There were sometimes, thirty or forty Lyceums per year, and in talking to the artists as they came to the university, they would mention that they did not know how dean Clark manipulated things. He manipulated the financial end of things so that this university got more for their dollar than anyplace they knew. Dean Clark really spent the time and did his homework, and he knew which of the artists were really outstanding and which of the artists to bring. He brought the greatest artists in the world here and he took great delight in that. One can imagine what an influence this would have with young music students, who would have the opportunity of hearing the greatest artists in their particular instrument. I can remember also, that between dean Clark, and professor Robertson, they always entertained these people, and the students were always invited to dinners and to entertainments where they got a chance to hobnob and rub shoulders and become personally acquainted with these great artists which had great effect on their lives.
- H: I know that Herald and Mabel took this on as a labor of love. And with unlimited dedication, they brought these people in and made them feel at home and personally entertained them and fed them.

- S: Speaking of Mabel, she was such a talented person. I don't remember, anywhere of having gourmet meals like I've had at Mabel Clark's. She was a genius in the kitchen, and between what she offered and what Herald and LeRoy Robertson offered, there was something here, that possibly in the whole world, you didn't have.
- H: I know that many great artists were suprised at the level of taste of the audience that they played to in Provo. Singers, instead of singing nursery rhymes, sang arias, and after one visit to Provo, the level of the numbers that they presented was completely different.
- S: Yes, in fact, in 1951 I was in Cincinnati, the conductor of the Cincinnati Symphony was a very close friend of mine. I was back there staying a month with him, and as he would introduce me to the artists, and mention that I was from the Brigham Young University, they couldn't talk about anything else besides Brigham Young University. They said that of all the places that they had been to throughout the world, probably the place that they felt closest to was Brigham Young University. I can remember one singer, I can't remember her name at the present time, told me that she had mentioned that she had got a contract from Herald R. Clark to sing at the Brigham Young University. She had mentioned it to one of her artist friends, and one of her friends said, "You must change your program for the university there, don't sing what you are singing throughout the west, but sing what you're singing in Carnegie Hall. Another time, I was at a professional summer camp on the shores of Lake Michigan where they had a very fine orchestra. The summer orchestra was made up of men from the Chicago Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra and other places. As I would meet these people, invariably they would tell me how much they appreciated Brigham Young University. I can remember the first trombonist of the great Philadelphia Orchestra. I met at the rehearsal of the whole orchestra, he got up and told the orchestra that I was from Brigham Young University, and that the Philadelphia Orchestra had played there and at no place that they had ever played, were they as happy and as well received and treated so royally and so graciously as they were here. He took about fifteen minutes telling everybody the great things of Brigham Young University.
- H: Isn't that gratifying now.
- S: In 1947, Herold R. Clark brought the Los Angeles Philharmonic to Provo as a part of the LDS Church Centennial celebration. The orchestra remained in Provo an entire week performing two concerts daily.

H: Would you like to comment about where the music programs should go from here. Do you see any changes, a change of direction in standard or anything?

S: I think music, like a lot of other things right at the present time, is in the throws of a great revolution; which direction they'll take no one knows. I'm a little old fashioned; many times I think that musicians are their own greatest enemies. Sometimes through their study, they get too far away from the common ordinary people. I think the composers of the present time have left humanity behind. I think that many of the present day composers, the things that they are writing, are not understood by the non musician. So to me, that poses a very difficult question. Another thing that's very difficult is that people, in any field can become over saturated. I think that's true of football. By the time we get through the January bowl games, people are over saturated. I think that recordings and T.V., and radio, make it possible for people to become over saturated with music. For instance, the Beethoven Fifth Symphony is heard so much, and has been heard so much that to some, it has become boring. Where twenty, thirty of fifty years ago, you heard the Fifth Symphony on a New York Philharmonic program, probably once a season, maybe once every other season. It was something fresh and new again. But now, everybody has a recording of it and an orchestra plays it and nobody pays much attention to it because it is old stuff; they've heard it so much they know it backwards. I know music students who have twelve or fifteen different recordings of the Fifth Symphony, just to see how conductors differ. As they hear it, if it isn't done just in a certain way, it is no good to them anymore. I think to the question of what is going to happen, what should happen, where is it going, I can answer you with great definitiveness, I don't know.

H: That reminds me of something LeRoy Robertson said. I think it was in relation to some popular music, which I think I was a little critical of. LeRoy said, "Well, there's some very interesting harmonies." He saw some values there that were beyond me.

S: The popular music at this time has a terrific influence on what we speak of as the classic music of the time. I can remember when I first heard, for instance, The Rights of Spring. I was in college at the time, but it was so way out, I actually got sick to my stomach. Now I hear The Rights of Spring, and I listen to it like I do a Mozart symphony.

H: Does the same apply to Bartok?

- S: Oh yes, the music of Bartok, while still most challenging has become understandable and enjoyable to most everyone. I think that that composer has always been ahead of his time. Many things that are written now will die, but some things that are written now even that we don't think are so great, will catch on and in the next generation become very popular.
- H: So the composers mold public opinion.
- S: Yes, there are certain intrinsic values that I think people can appreciate, the field of music is like all other fields. In your own field, Dr. Harrison, there are so many things coming out now that one cannot keep up with in his own field. A student getting his doctorate today, in my field, makes me old fashioned. I can't possibly keep up with the new doctors coming out. So much is being discovered, and so many ways are being discovered in which to combine various tones, that it blows the imagination.
- H: Turning from the future back to the past, are there some recollections that you have about the school, the department, or the people, that you would like to record, or you think ought to be preserved?
- S: I can remember LeRoy Robertson was always very interested in the string quartet. As he taught here, he was always forming string quartets. In those days the University Quartet consisted of two faculty members and two students. On one occasion, we had a concert engagement in Price, Utah. Just before we went to Price, one of these terrific, cold fronts came through, and when we got there, it was thirty below zero. It was so cold, that to keep warm the whole quartet went to their rooms and crawled in bed. At the concert that night, they had heaters on the stage a heater for each member of the quartet. The members of the audience wore overcoats throughout the performance. I have never played under circumstances that were as hard to play as those. Our fingers were so cold. But we did our very best. We really suffered to bring great music to the people. The hall was packed that night, even under those trying circumstances. Then I can remember raveling to places like Castle Dale with the Symphony orchestra in buses, before there were paved roads. It was spring and the roads were very muddy, all of the male members of the orchestra would get out and help push the busses up the hills. I remember rehearsals under LeRoy Robertson; his philosophy was that the really great performances never happened in performance, but that they happened in rehearsal. I can remember his working for certain effects. We would begin to play, his eyes would turn upwards. He never looked at the orchestra, he was always gazing into the heavens as if to

draw inspiration. As we achieved his goal in our playing, his whole face would light up as if it were transformed, and you could see the light spark in his eyes. It was tremendous.

H: What are your recollections of people at BYU who you enjoyed working with?

S: Almost the first day I was at the university, I met a young student and we hit it off very well. Over the years, I have had a tremendous friendship with Dr. John Halliday. He was a year ahead of me in school, but we were married about the same time, and we had our children about the same time. We enjoyed doing things about the same time: we enjoyed the same type of things. In fact, we both graduated the same year.

At that time, there was an opening in the department and Brother Robertson and President Harris, couldn't choose between us, so they took the salary and gave us each a job; the two of us split the salary. As luck would have it, I suppose both for me and for John Halliday, my father was taken sick in Grand Junction, Colorado and I was called to take his place at the college over there. That left John Halliday with a whole job and a whole salary. We've studied together, we've played together, and we raised our families together and that has been a great friendship throughout the years. We've done many things musically together. For many years, he had one of the finest choruses at the university. We would combine our organizations in performing the great choral and orchestra literature. At times, I trained the orchestra for him and he directed the concert performance, and at times he trained the chorus for me and I directed the concert performance. There was a group of very talented young students that came to the university in the early 1950's, graduated from the university, went east to school, received their Doctorates at other schools and made excellent contributions in teaching. They were brought back to the university as professors and although these young students who are twenty, thirty and forty years younger than I, have the closest bond of friendship with me. We enjoy going on trips together, we enjoy working musically together. It's almost like a father and his children--the close relationship of these great young people and myself. My wife and I have often marveled at this phenomenon.

H: I think that is a tribute to you and the kind of person that you and Ilene represent. You've told us a bit about LeRoy Robertson and his conducting of the symphony, what about your own experiences in conducting the symphony?

S: There was, over a period of twenty or so years, that I conducted the orchestra. The inspiration and the excitement

of the occasions where, for instance in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, or in the Symphony Hall in San Francisco, held a very great opportunity to play, and show what the university could do. At times, when we would get through, the audience would burst into applause and give us a standing ovation--to look at the faces of the kids, to see how their work was accepted and the look in my own face, showed how I felt. Many times it was so overwhelmingly emotional, that one could not keep the tears back. When I think of the opportunities that I've had of working with these sweet wonderful kids that come to this university and the enjoyment that I've had from it, it almost seems like a travesty that I was paid to do this work.

H: I guess many of us have many of those same feelings. Don't you have a lot of fear and apprehension about a performance before it begins?

S: Bert, there are times when just before I walk out on the stage, I doubted whether I could keep my dinner. I can remember one time doing a piano concerto with a very talented pianist. She was playing along watching her fingers, in performance, and her own fingers going over the keys hypnotized her. All of a sudden she stopped, and I looked at her, and she had a stare on her face. She was out of this world; she was completely hypnotized. I talked to her and took ahold of her hand, and she finally woke up. We picked up right from where she quite, and went on without a hitch. It was marvelous.

H: I guess you have to be prepared for any eventualities.

S: Any and everything; they all happen.

H: There's an angle that I would like to hear you talk about, and that is, the level of music appreciation and composition of works in the Church.

S: That's a hard one. The musicians of the Church are tremendously anxious right now. There are more professional musicians in the Church now, as the Church becomes artistically more mature. I don't think that any church or civilization is particularly mature during its growing periods. I think there are more serious things to consider than the arts. For instance, at the time of Christ, or when the Catholic Church was being developed, artistically, I don't think much was happening. But, as things become well developed then the great artistic thing takes place, and there are many people, many musicians in the Church that are trying to raise the standards of all forms of art, concluding music. In fact, the Music Department at the Y is actively engaged in organizing an all church art symposium

or music symposium and encouraging LDS composers from all over the Church to submit church music of high quality. One of the great things of the fine arts festival that Brigham Young University sponsors is the original compositions which will be judged and prizes awarded. I think this is having a great influence on raising the level of music in the Church. As far as our hymns and these things go, this is going to offer some problem because so many hymns mean so much to so many people. Musically the LDS Church had the great disadvantage of growing up at a time when Church music was at a rather low ebb--1850-1870. The Moody and Sanck hymn was very popular at that time, but as music, it isn't very great art. We have so many of this type of hymn in our Church, and they mean much to people because they remember them from their childhood. They are difficult to eliminate from our hymnal I think, not only in music, but in the graphic arts also, we realize that as a Church, the level of art is rather low, but, it is being worked on.

H: You commented about in the preponderance of music and its ready availability, tend to--and in losing its freshness because of too frequent repetition. Do you think this also applies to hymns that we just beat to death?

S: I think so without a doubt, without a doubt.

H: You lose the message because you mechanically have it down.

S: I think one of the great things that we are suffering in the new program, is that there is no place now to learn new music. If they should come out with a new hymn book, we'd sing the songs in the new hymn book that we know, and the rest of them would not be used at all. I don't think there is a place in which to learn new hymns.

H: Do you have any suggestions how that could be accomplished?

S: I think once a month they could have the choir present a new hymn to the congregation and then for five minutes or so practice a new hymn. Something has to be done to correct the ever narrowing repertoire of hymns. That's one of the great problems in music as I see it, in the Church in the present.

H: Are there areas that we've missed that you think we ought to cover?

S: I think possibly we should mention the physical facilities just a little.

H: Then I wanted to ask you to cover a little bit about your experiences as a bishop. Tell us about the physical

facilities that you've enjoyed here.

S: In the old days of the university, it's amazing what happened with the facilities that we had at the time--the lack of good instruments, the lack of proper facilities in which to rehearse, the lack of visual education and things of that nature for classrooms. It's like the old days when they used to teach nothing but the three R's in school. There were a lot of wonderful people that came out of schools of that nature. The present Harris Fine Arts Center, I think is very, very well named. I think it's inspiration that it was named the Harris Fine Arts Center, because President Harris really was the father of the arts at BYU. The university has one of the finest facilities of any university in America. I think that you'll find that the faculty and the students appreciate it. I've just been in Peru where the universities there look like barns; they look like Army barracks of the seventeenth, and eighteenth century--graffiti all over the walls, both inside and outside the buildings. But I've had friends from Europe, friends from various parts of the world come and visit, and you show them our facilities and they just can't believe it--only not the facilities, but how clean they are and how kept up they are, and the wonderful work that the physical facilities department does in keeping both inside and outside in such perfect order. I think that the students appreciate this, that they are very proud of how things look, they are not about to ruin it. With these great facilities, has come a transformation in the students attitude. They appreciate what the Church and what the university offers.

I remember when I had just spent a year at the University of Illinois doing post graduate work. The year following my return to Provo from Illinois, the head violin teacher and head of the string department, Dr. Paul Rolland who was one of the leading figures in the string music education in the world, came to visit me. As I was showing him around the facilities, this was in 1965, he was very interested because the University of Illinois was considering building new facilities for their music department. As we went through the facilities, he was admiring this and admiring that, and commenting about this and how they would like to have something comparable. Then when we were all through, he said, "You know Lawrence, as great as your facilities are, they are not what really impress me. The great thing about Brigham Young University is your students. In my travels all the world, I have never beheld what I have beheld here--such clean, such courteous, such wonderful young students. No matter what kind of facilities you have they would rate second."

H: How wonderful. Changing the track a little bit, you spent a

number of years as bishop of the Provo East Fourth Ward. Would you like to tell us a little bit about your experiences in this capacity.

S: Being Bishop really has had more effect on my life than you would imagine. In the first place, at the time, in 1958, I was in the High Council. Everybody was moving from our neighborhood of town, up onto the hill. We had looked around, found a house, and we were going down that very night to put our signatures on a piece of paper to buy it. That afternoon, I had met our stake president who was President Sherman Hill, and I said, "President Hill, you better look around for a new High Councilman because we'll be moving out of the stake next month." He said, "Oh you can't move, you're going to be sustained as Bishop of your ward Sunday night." I went home and talked to my wife, and we decided that we would forego the new house and serve as Bishop. He told me that the First Presidency had already approved me, and I was to be presented to the ward the following Sunday night. My wife and I talked it over, and we knew that the term as Bishop was five years or so. We decided rather than move, we would remodel. We have been happy ever since, our neighborhood is so wonderful. Right now, instead of paying off on a new home, we're in the clear, which makes a lot of difference. That's just one story in how it started. The thing that amazed me as Bishop, was how people honor, and venerate and sustain the office of bishop. I don't think it was Lawrence Sardoni that brought about this sudden change in the way I was looked on in the ward, but rather, it was Bishop Sardoni. When one can see the way that people look at their--oh, you might say--'chosen leader', and the way that people are willing to cooperate, one gains a whole new perspective in a new attitude toward people. People are so wonderful, they are just so wonderful--people who before I was Bishop, I wouldn't have asked them for twenty-five dollars, it has always been difficult for me to ask people for money. But for the good of the ward, certain things had to be done. I can remember the first time that I presented the budget to the ward. I was fit to be tied, I was ready to climb a wall. I went into that meeting with butterflies in my stomach, and yet when we presented the budget, the members of the priesthood got up and talked about it and thought possibly that our budget wasn't high enough, that we should do a little something more than this. And when I saw how interested people were in their own children and their fellow beings, it was another great revelation to me. I can remember experiences where that--people would come to me for advice and I would do my best to help them. Later they would come and say, "Bishop, we surely appreciated the advice you gave us, things just seemed to work out. Even though some member of our family thought differently, we did as you said, and things couldn't have worked out better." I

know it wasn't me, but I know that people received extra help. I have a testimony of that. I had one very great lesson in this. One time we had a young boy in the ward who was a convert to the Church, who made it known that he would like to go on a mission. At the time, I had some dealings with President Henry D. Moyle, and I was quite closely connected with him. This young boy was in the mission home and President Moyle called me one afternoon and he said, "Bishop, I don't think we ought to send this boy on a mission." Now what he knew about this boy, I have no idea. I stood up for the boy and told him that he was a wonderful boy, which he was, and that I thought he should be given his chance to go on a mission. We sent the boy on a mission, he arrived at the mission home, and told the mission president that he wanted to go home. Within twenty-four hours after he left, I had received a call from his mission president that the boy refused to stay on a mission, so I told the boy to come home immediately. The boy was a wonderful boy, he graduated from BYU and went out in the Seminary system. He has been a great help in cities and towns, wherever he's been. He's been just terrific. But I think that if one of the authorities should say, "Brother Sardoni, jump." I'd say, "How high, sir?" One of the things as being a Bishop, that is a tremendous experience, is with the way one works with counselors. I was blessed with marvelous counselors, E. Louis Allen, Dean Walker and Gus Black, and the present Bishop, Elbert Simmons. The opportunity of working closely with men like this was a real inspiration. The insurmountable problems that one runs into, is a great source of maturity for any Bishop I think, in seeing how insufficient, how small sometimes we really are in helping other people.

H: That's always been my observation, that no Bishop is prepared to be a Bishop when he's first appointed but you very quickly grow into it, and that is the genius of the Church.

S: I don't think there is any schooling that could prepare a Bishop. Brother LeGrand Richards set me apart, and he gave me a wonderful blessing. He said, among other things, "Bishop, you hear many times of the mantle of the Bishop, and lots of times, we make light of this. I promise you that you will come to know that the mantle of the Bishop is really a very real thing." I wondered about that many times because it was still me and I was still immature in a lot of my judgements, and I was still making mistakes, and I still had to work like crazy to make things happen. It seemed sometimes that I had to do it all, that I wasn't getting any help. I can remember being released and waking up the next morning and I felt absolutely naked. I thought of this statement of Elder Richards, "That I would

come to know that the mantle of a Bishop is a real thing." It took a long time to get over that. It was just like something was gone.

H: My uncle, Joseph Stores, said something of the record of the Church, he was a Bishop in American Fork for forty-five or forty-seven years, and when he was released, he was a lost man. He just couldn't reconcile his present status with what he had been.

S: You know, I think though, with this welfare and the young people's programs, that the Church is very wise in keeping their Bishops about five years, because you are really burnt out after so much going, going and going.

H: Tell us about your Church activities since being released from the Bishopric.

S: It seems like there has never been a hiatus. As I was released as Bishop, I went on leave of absence and then as I came back, I was taken into the High Council again. I served about ten years that time on the High Council, then as I was released from the High Council, I stepped into a very important post. I relieved, I think, Brother Bert Harrison as the High Priest Group Leader of the Twelfth Ward. And Bert, while I was both Bishop and High Priest Group Leader, I really appreciated your support. I remember of meeting with you monthly on personal priesthood interviews and things like that, and it certainly was a very rewarding experience.

H: Thank you.

S: Then, I was called to work in the Provo Temple, which I did for not quite a year. I gave that up to fulfill a mission to Peru. Our mission to Peru was a terrific, terrific experience. I was called as a leadership missionary, and I worked with branch presidents, and district presidents. Later, I was given all of the welfare missionaries. Still later, I scheduled the physical facilities for the mission; procuring buildings in which all the branches could meet in, and taking care of janitorial problems. One of the hardest things, but one of the most rewarding things, was going into the cities and towns looking for plots of ground upon which we could buy to build chapels. This was a very rewarding experience, working with the local brethren very closely in obtaining land for chapels. This was a great year and a half of my life. Since our return from the mission, I have a position that I enjoy very much now; I work as the stake leader, and with the Spanish extraction program and as a Sealer in the Provo Temple.

- H: One of the things that made your mission possible, or at least more productive maybe, even feasible at all, has been your interest in the Spanish language. Comment on that will you?
- S: I told you that in my hobbies, that sometimes, very foolishly, instead of just becoming a hobby, it becomes an obsession. I have a sister who lives in Tempe, Arizona. We were visiting them on Christmas, and my brother-in-law said to me, "I've been enjoying something very, very much; I'm taking a Spanish class. I've never had so much fun in my life." In the back of my mind came the thought, "you've always wanted to do that, why don't you do that? I was going to have an operation, Bert, and I would be in the hospital about ten days, so I went up and bought a Spanish book and instead of just lying there in the hospital, I'd study Spanish. I did that, and I was quite taken up with it. I took several classes at the university in Spanish and last leave of absence was spent in Mexico. We travelled twenty thousand miles; we went to Mexico in our camper, and lived in the camper. It was peculiar that when we were visiting with my brother-in-law, he wanted us to come and go to Mexico with him the following Christmas holidays. I told him that I had been trying to get my wife to go to Mexico for thirty-five years and she wouldn't go. She didn't like Mexico and she wouldn't go. Anyway, we talked her into going. For twelve years after that, we spent our Christmas holidays in Mexico. She was so in love with the place, that even though I wasn't too interested in going back to Mexico, she wanted to go to Mexico for Christmas. I'll always remember the very enjoyable trip we had with you in going completely though the length of the Baja, California, and Mexico. That was a rewarding experience.
- H: That was a great experience. I'd like to get one other thing on tape and that is, my appreciation for your efforts in getting a pipe organ for our chapel. I think that is a tremendous addition that has given us a new dimension in musical sound.
- S: I do too. I was a little worried at first; a small pipe organ, I thought would be very inadequate, because I had been used to very much larger organs, yet the tone of the pipe organ and the tone of an electric instrument just can't be compared. I think everybody in the ward appreciates that pipe organ.
- H: I think so too.
- S: I would like to take the credit, but it really belongs to Verina and Ephriam Hatch, they are the ones that really put up the fight for it. That was one of the greatest things

that happened in the ward.

H: I have a friend, Harold White, who is involved in one of Springville's stakes. He was talking the other night about putting a pipe organ there. He said that it cost a lot more to begin with than an electric organ, but then he sighted one or two other chapels where they are replacing the electric organs with pipe organs.

S: The initial expense is about half again as much. But in fifteen years you have to replace your--you have the whole expense of the electric organ again, they last ten or fifteen years. The pipe organ lasts much longer.

H: Are there other areas that you think that we have neglected?

S: I think that you have done a very good job.

H: I think you have.

S: I would just like to express my appreciation to being able to teach in the university where my colleagues had the same ideals that I have, and where I could rub shoulders everyday with High Councilmen, with Stake Presidents, with Bishops, and with people who were dedicated to the Church as well as being dedicated to their profession. People who were dedicated to their students; who were trying as I was trying, to live righteously as we understand it. This had been one of the great thrills of my life. I have been in enough other places and connected with enough other university staffs--I don't want to belittle that at all, yet, there's been something here that has been just choice. It's been a choice experience all of my life. I appreciate it.

H: We've commented frequently that we can't understand how we have been fortunate enough to be able to spend our life in this environment. It is truly a great place to be. Thanks Lawrence, I guess we have covered it.

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